

Dear Members of the Human Services Committee of the Connecticut General Assembly:

My name is Rosa Paredes , I am from New Haven.

I am in favor of S.B. 284: AN ACT INCREASING THE AGE FROM EIGHT TO EIGHTEEN FOR AN INCOME ELIGIBLE PERSON TO OBTAIN HEALTH CARE REGARDLESS OF IMMIGRATION STATUS. Expanding access to HUSKY to age 18, regardless of immigration status, is an important step in ensuring that our immigrant community has access to the health care we need. But our work doesn't end with expanding access to age 18; we need to open access to HUSKY and health care to all immigrants of any age, including parents and adults.

I am a mother of two non-status children who depend on me and deserve to be cared for. When my children get sick with the flu or gastric indigestion, we are always trying to see a pediatrician to help us and we do not get prompt care. Our financial resources are also not enough to cover our children's healthcare when they get sick.

One of my children gets sick very often and due to lack of financial resources, we have had to go back and leave through the clinic doors because we can't afford to pay. It is hard to see when a child is suffering and you can't do anything about it. We are afraid that our son may end up severely ill if we do not get him the care he needs. But we can't get immediate access to health services or more urgent care because of lack of insurance. Many times and especially with these times of coronavirus it has been very difficult to get appointments at the clinics, Whenever you call they give you appointments far out, even though the issue is more urgent. That is why I ask the authorities to do this because they are the only ones who can help us to pass this law so that our children, who are innocent and vulnerable, can have more affordable health care services.

Additionally, some illnesses are chronic, such as a cancer, an asthma, a rhinitis, so in that sense these children would need more help, and they deserve that right to equality and to have insurance like any other child. This legislation would help us a lot because we would have more constant attention and it would give us parents peace of mind that our children have health insurance. The children are our first priority because they need constant follow-up for their health. We ask our legislators for their support because we are suffering. There are many cases, children who have come to this country and are part of this country in all aspects and in their communities. They are American even if they don't have the status. Physical health and mental health is the foundation of a healthy community and for children to be emotionally well, physical health and mental health have to be covered in coordination. Teens, especially, need physical and emotional support because they are navigating a society of drug addiction and many types of violence.

I support S.B. 284 and ask the committee to support and pass this legislation. Going forward, I ask the committee to work to open access to all immigrants, regardless of age.

Thank you for your time,

Rosa Paredes